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Message Text

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ACTION SNM-05

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-10 INR-07 EB-08 IGA-02 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1698

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FOR S/NM FALCO FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR, EPAP, TH
SUBJECT: U.S. DEPT OF AGRICULTURE CROP RESEARCH PROGRAM

1. THE RECENT VISIT TO THAILAND OF QUENTIN JONES, PROJECT LEADER, AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE, USDA, HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE NEED FOR CLOSER COORDINATION AND OVERSIGHT OF THE S/NM FUNDED AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH PROGRAM BEING CONDUCTED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

2. OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH JONES AND MY VISIT TO CHIANG MAI LAST WEEK FOR MEETING OF THE HIGHLAND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH COORDINATING COMMITTEE (HARCC) HAS ME CONCERNED THAT THE CURRENT DIRECTION OF THE RELATIVELY WELL FUNDED RESEARCH GRANTS UNDER THIS PROGRAM IS IN DANGER OF OBSCURING THE NEED TO MOVE FROM BASIC RESEARCH ACTIVITIES TO THE NEXT PHASE, THE APPLICATION OF THE RESULTS OF PAST RESEARCH THROUGH EXTENSION. AMONG THAIS INVOLVED, THERE APPEARS TO BE TENDENCY TO REGARD OUR PROGRAM AS A SOURCE OF DIRECT FUNDING FOR A VARIETY OF BASIC RESEARCH PROJECTS, DECISIONS ON WHICH ARE CONTROLLED
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BY A SMALL NUMBER OF RESEARCH-ORIENTED ACADEMICIANS AND PRINCE PHISADET WHO CHAIRS HARCC.

3. IN TERMS OF OUR OBJECTIVES I BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE COME TO POINT WHEN WE MUST SHIFT FOCUS TO TESTING, PILOT PROJECTS AND GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF THAI GOVERNMENT AND UN AGENCIES IN DEVELOPMENT OF A PROPER CROP SUBSTITUTION

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PROGRAM. PROGRAM MUST BE MORE CLOSELY COORDINATED WITH
OUR OTHER EFFORTS IN NARCOTICS/CROP SUBSTITUTION AREA.
OTHERWISE IT IS IN DANGER OF BECOMING SIMPLY A MECHANISM
FOR FUNDING INDIVIDUAL THAI ACADEMIC AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
PROJECTS, WHICH MIGHT IN THEMSELVES BE INTERESTING ANDUSEFUL
BUT ARE NOT RPT NOT READILY TRANSLATEABLE INTO SUPPORT
OF OUR EFFORTS TO GET THAI MOVING IN THE NARCOTICS/CROP
SUBSTITUTION FIELD.

4. SINCE THIS PROGRAM IS S/NM FUNDED, I BELIEVE THE
FOLLOWING STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO ASSURE A PROPER CONTROL
AND COORDINATION IN THE FUTURE, BOTH HERE AND IN
WASHINGTON. THESE STEPS ARE:
A. ALL MATTERS RELATING TO THE CROP RESEARCH
PROGRAM SHOULD BE HANDLED IN STATE/EMBASSY MESSAGE CHANNELS.
THIS SHOULD APPLY ALSO TO QUESTIONS OF TRAVEL AND
EXTENDED TDY OF USDA PERSONNEL UNDER THIS PROGRAM. AS
A MATTER OF PRACTICE, ALL PROPOSALS FOR VISITS BY SENIOR
PROJECT PERSONNEL AND OTHER TDY OR PERMANENTLY ASSIGNED
OFFICERS SHOULD BE CONCURRED IN BY THE EMBASSY IN STATE
CHANNELS IN MANNER ANALOGOUS TO AID PROCEDURES. IN PAST
WE HAVE BEEN BARELY INFORMED OF VISITS, USUALLY BY USDA
MESSAGE. IN CASE OF JONES' LAST STAY HERE, WE HAD TO
HAVE AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE MAKE SPECIAL EFFORT TO INFORM
HIM AT THE AIRPORT THAT HE WAS TO CALL EMBASSY BEFORE
PROCEEDING TO CHIANG MAI FOR MEETINGS WITH THAIS.
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B. ONGOING PROGRAMS, PROPOSALS FOR NEW RESEARCH
PROJECTS AND OTHER USDA PROJECT ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE
FORMALLY COORDINATED WITH THE MISSION WITHIN THE CONTEXT
OF THE NARCOTICS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. OUR IMPRESSION
HERE IS THAT PROJECT LEADER AND OTHER USDA PERSONNEL
INVOLVED IN THIS PROGRAM ASSUME THAT NEEDED COORDINATION,
IF ANY, IS BEING MANAGED BY THEM IN WASHINGTON DIRECTLY
WITH DEPARTMENT,WITH INFORMAL BRIEFINGS OF EMBASSY
PERSONNEL HERE SUFFICING. THIS DOES NOT RPT NOT PROVIDE A
SOUND MECHANISM FOR RELATING THIS PROGRAM TO OUR OTHER
ACTIVITIES, PARTICULARLY IF RTG DOES BECOME MORE ACTIVE.

5. AS INDICATED ABOVE, I BELIEVE DIRECTION FOR USG-
FUNDED CROP RESEARCH PROGRAMS SHOULD BE INCREASINGLY IN
APPLICATION OF EXISTING STUDIES IN THE FIELD THROUGH
EXTENSION. IN THAT CONNECTION UNDERSTAND THAT SEARCH FOR
REPLACEMENT OF USDA HIGHLAND RESEARCH OFFICER IN CHIANG
MAI IS NOW IN PROCESS BUT NO ASSIGNMENT LIKELY UNTIL NEXT
SPRING. IN MY VIEW THAT INDIVIDUAL SHOULD HAVE EXTENSION
EXPERIENCE AND BE EXTENSION ORIENTED. HE SHOULD MAINTAIN
THE U.S. INTEREST IN THAI RESEARCH, BUT THE EMPHASIS SHOULD
BE ON APPLICATION OF RESEARCH TO THE FIELD. HE SHOULD

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ALSO UNDERSTAND RELATIONSHIP OF THIS PROGRAM TO MISSION NARCOTICS PROGRAM OVERALL AND UNDERSTAND THAT HE AND HIS WORK FALL WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF MISSION RESPONSIBILITIES.

6. DURING MY WASHINGTON STAY I HOPE TO SEE YOU AND WHOMEVER YOU SUGGEST IN USDA TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER FURTHER. THIS MESSAGE IS STADIS FOR INITIAL CONTROL OF DISTRIBUTION, BUT I HAVE NO OBJECTION TO YOUR PASSING IT TO USDA OR OTHERS.
WHITEHOUSE

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